

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

**Applicant/Project Name:** Fall River Electric Coop. Buffalo Basin 7.2kV Power Line ROW Request

**Project/Case File Number:** IDI-38088

**Project Lead:** Heather Schlenker

**CX Number:** ID-I010-2016-0009-CX

**Date of Preparation:** February 24, 2016

### BACK GROUND:

On January 19, 2016 Fall River Electric Co-op, submitted an application (SF-299) requesting a right-of-way (ROW) authorization for new 7.2kV buried power line located on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Fremont County as described below:

Boise Meridian, Idaho

T. 12 N., R. 44 E.,  
sec. 17, SE1/4SE1/4NW1/4, and NE1/4NE1/4NW1/4.

The power line ROW, serial number IDI-38088, would be known as the Buffalo Basin Line Extension and would be located almost entirely on private land currently owned by Teton Peak. The line would need to tie into an existing buried power line on public lands (IDI-30490), crossing approximately 30 feet in length, in the SE ¼ of section 17. The line would then run on private land, crossing back over a corner of public lands in the NE ¼ of section 17 for approximately 15 feet. The ROW would be for a total of 45 feet in length, 15 feet in width, encumbering 0.02 acres of public land more or less. (see Exhibit A). The line would provide power to a private customer in an adjacent sub-division.

Fall River plans to use a rubber track vibratory plow to install the cable and a backhoe at the starting and ending points. The vibration method of installation would cause little disturbance to the vegetation. The trench would be approximately 3 feet deep by 12 inches wide. No staging will be needed on BLM lands.

### PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is to issue a new FLPMA right-of-way authorization to Fall River Electric for IDI-38088 for a period of approximately 30 years, expiring on December 31, 2045, for the use, operation and maintenance of buried power line. The issuance of the grant of right-of-way is authorized under Public Law 94-579 (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976) (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761), and the current regulations found at 43 CFR 2800. Standard BLM terms and conditions will be included in the FLPMA grant.

## **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION:**

On March 14, 2016 this project was brought before an Interdisciplinary Team consisting of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) specialists. A description of the proposed action was posted to the online NEPA register. This is available to members of the public through the Upper Snake Field Office webpage. No comments were received and no issues/conflicts were identified for this project.

## **LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE:**

The Proposed Action is located in Fremont County, within the boundaries of the Upper Snake Field Office. The BLM's Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP) (BLM 1985) provides general guidelines for the protection and use of resources in these areas. While this action is not specifically addressed in the document, the plan does provide for the consideration of right-of-way applications.

The Proposed Action is not located in designated Sage-grouse Habitat and has been found to be in conformance with the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Greater Sage Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (GRSG ARMPA) (September 2015)

## **APPEALS INFORMATION:**

Right-of-way Decisions become effective upon approval by the authorized officer (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Appeal procedures may be found at *43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993)* or *43 CFR 2801.10*.

## FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION:

The proposed action is categorically excluded as outlined in 516 DM 11.9 E (17) for the grant of a short right-of-way for utility service to an individual residence. None of the exceptions found in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 46.215 apply.

Standard stipulations currently used for rights-of-ways would be incorporated into the grant to bring this authorization to current standards.

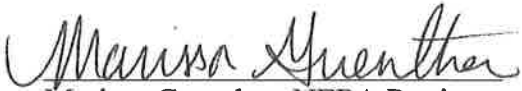
I recommend that a FLPMA right-of-way authorization, be granted to Fall River Electric Co-op for IDI-38088, for a period of approximately 30 years, expiring on December 31, 2045. The grant would be issued with the right to renew, subject to the terms and conditions and the attached stipulations (see Exhibit B).

The ROW is to be issued under the authority of Public Law 94-579 (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761), and the regulations found at 43 CFR 2800. Annual rental would be required in accordance with 43 CFR 2806.10



Heather Schlenker, Realty Specialist

Date: 3/23/16



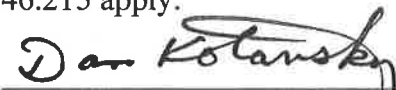
Marissa Guenther, NEPA Reviewer

Date: 3/23/16

## DECISION AND RATIONALE FOR THE DECISION:

It is my decision that right-of-way grant, IDI-38088 granted to Fall River Electric Co-op for a period of approximately 30 years, expiring on December 31, 2045. The ROW is issued under the authority of Title V of Public Law 94-579 (Federal Land Policy and Management Act) and be subject to the 43 CFR 2800 regulations. The grant would be issued for approximately 30 years, with the right to renew, subject to the current terms and conditions found at 43 CFR 2800 and the attached stipulations (Exhibit B). Annual rental would be required in accordance with 43 CFR 2806.10.

The subject action qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion and meets the criteria contained in 516 DM 2, 11.9 E (17). None of the exceptions found in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 46.215 apply.



Jeremy Casterson, Field Manager

Acting for

Date: 3/24/2016

## Extraordinary Circumstances Requiring Preparation of an EA or EIS

(43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 46.215)

The action described in categorical exclusion # ID- I010-2016-00009-CX has been reviewed to determine that none of the extraordinary circumstances listed below pertain to the proposed action.

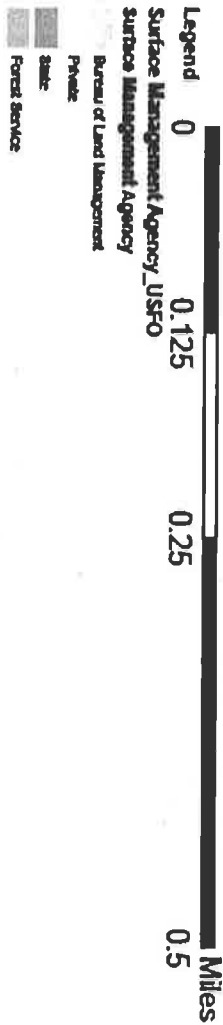
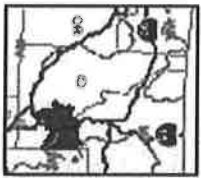
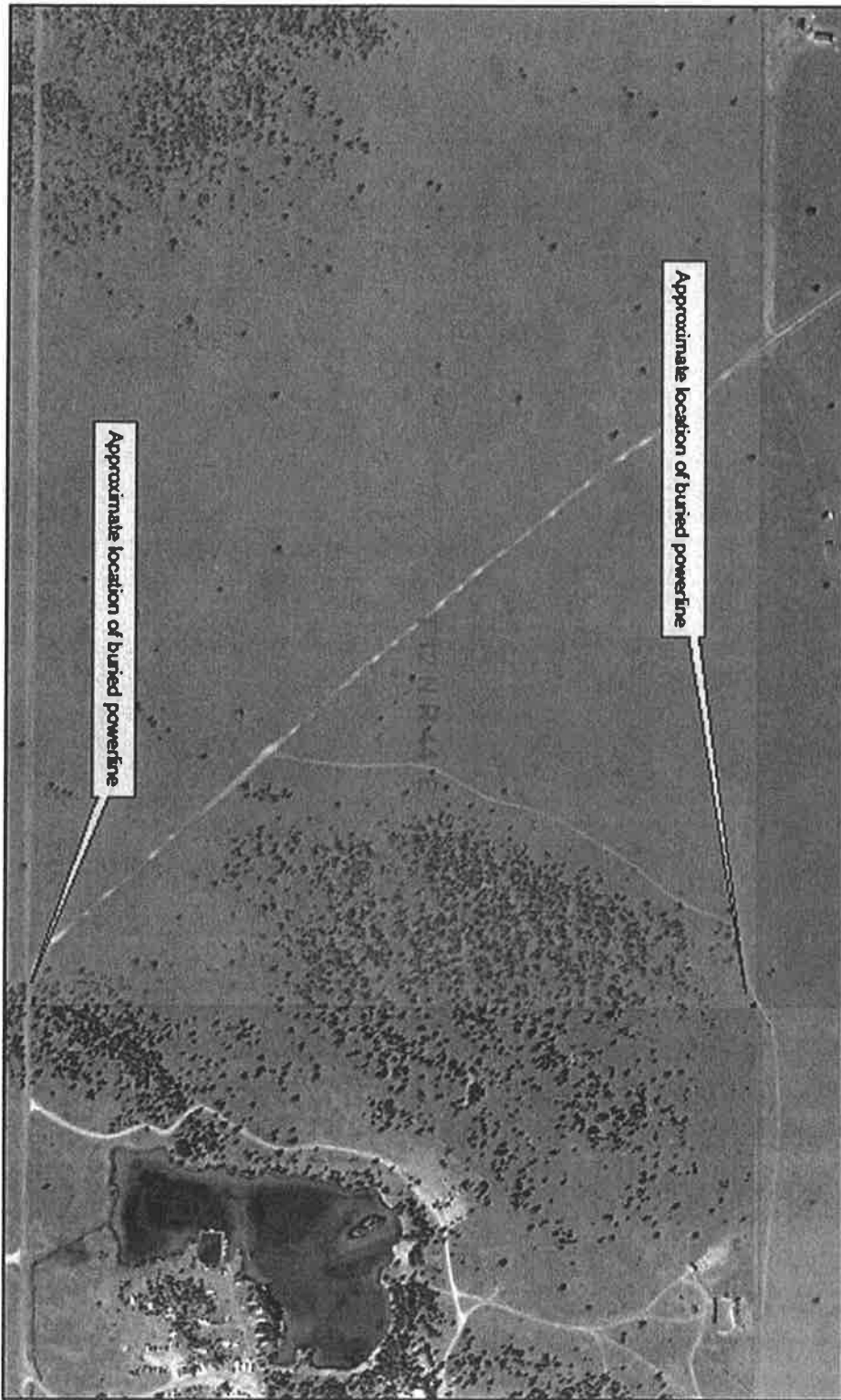
<u>DM</u> #	<u>Extraordinary Circumstance</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
1	Have significant impacts on public health or safety. <i>The proposed action would have no significant impacts on health or safety of the public.</i>		X
2	Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. <i>No wilderness, wilderness study areas or wild and scenic rivers are present near the project area. The ROW proposal would not impede opportunities for recreation.</i> <i>This project is not located within a Research Natural Area (RNA).</i> <i>No significant impacts to riparian-wetland areas are expected to occur.</i> <i>Although migratory birds are present within the project area, no significant impacts to migratory birds are expected.</i> <i>The entire Area of Potential Effects (APE) has been inventoried at a Class III level.</i> <i>No cultural resources were identified as a result of these inventories.</i>		X
3	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2)(E)]. <i>Action would not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. No known highly controversial or potentially significant environmental effects are expected to result from the issuing of the ROW. Action would not impact water quality or stream channels and floodplains.</i>		X
4	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. <i>Action would not impact water quality or stream channels and floodplains. No known highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks are expected to result from the issuing of the ROW.</i>		X
5	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. <i>The proposed action would not establish a precedent for future actions. Standard maintenance and monitoring practices would continue to be accomplished for the ROW in the same manner as other authorized ROWs. However, any new ground</i>		X

<u>DM</u> #	<u>Extraordinary Circumstance</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
	<i>disturbing activities would be addressed and new NEPA would be required and effects evaluated.</i>		
6	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. <i>The proposed action would not have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. No cumulatively significant effects are anticipated. No cumulatively significant effects anticipated for the stream channel/floodplain.</i>		X
7	Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office. <i>As there are no known historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP located in the project area, the proposed action would have no significant impacts.</i>		X
8	Have significant impacts on species listed or proposed to be listed on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated critical habitat for these species. <i>As there are no T&amp;E or Proposed species, or critical habitat present within the project area, no significant impacts to these species would be expected.</i>		X
9	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. <i>The proposed action would not violate any federal law or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. No cumulatively significant effects anticipated.</i>		X
10	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). <i>The proposed action would have no adverse effect on low income or minority populations.</i>		X
11	Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007). <i>There are no sacred sites known to occur in the project area. Furthermore, the project would not limit access to Indian sacred sites on Federal lands or impact traditional resource use in the area.</i>		X
12	Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112). <i>Standard terms and conditions for weeds would be included in the authorization. The proposed action would not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species.</i>		X

Fall River Electric Coop. Buffalo Basin 7.2kV Power Line ROW Request  
 IDI-38088 Fremont County  
 T. 12 N., R. 44 E.,  
 sec. 17, SE1/4SE1/4NW1/4, and NE1/4NE1/4NW1/4.



**Exhibit A**  
3/17/2016 HS



## **Stipulations- Exhibit B**

**IDI-38088**

### **Operation and Maintenance**

1. The holder shall conduct all activities associated with the construction, operation, and termination of the right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.
2. No routine maintenance activities shall be performed during periods when the soil is too wet to adequately support construction equipment. If such equipment creates ruts in excess of 3 inches deep, the soil shall be deemed too wet to adequately support construction equipment.
3. Right-of-way shall be maintained in a sanitary condition at all times; waste materials at those sites shall be disposed of promptly at an appropriate waste disposal site. 'Waste' means all discarded matter including, but not limited to, human waste, trash, garbage, refuse, oil drums, petroleum products, ashes, and equipment.
4. There is reserved to the Authorized Officer, the right to grant additional rights-of-way or permits for compatible use on, over, under, or adjacent to the land involved in this grant.
5. The authorized officer may suspend or terminate in whole, or in part, any notice to proceed which has been issued when, in his judgment, conditions arise which result in the approved terms and conditions being inadequate to protect the public health and safety or to protect the environment.
6. Ninety (90) days prior to termination of the right-of-way, the holder shall contact the authorized officer to arrange a joint inspection of the right-of-way. This inspection will be held to agree to an acceptable termination (and rehabilitation) plan. This plan may include, but is not limited to, removal of facilities, drainage structures, or surface material, recontouring, topsoiling, or seeding. The authorized officer must approve the plan in writing prior to the holder's commencement of any termination activities.

### **Weed Control**

7. The holder shall be responsible for weed control within the limits of the right-of-way. The holder is responsible for consultation with the authorized officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods (within limits imposed in the grant stipulations).
8. Use of all pesticides (including fungicides, herbicides, insecticides, etc.) shall comply with the applicable Federal and State laws. Pesticides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, the holder shall obtain from the authorized officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers, and any

other information deemed necessary by the authorized officer. Emergency use of pesticides shall be approved in writing by the authorized officer prior to such use.

9. During surface disturbing construction and maintenance activities, the holder shall ensure that all construction equipment and vehicles are cleaned of all vegetation (stems, leaves, seeds, and all other vegetative parts) prior to entering public lands in order to minimize the transport and spread of noxious weeds. During surface disturbing construction and maintenance activities, the holder shall ensure that all construction equipment and vehicles are cleaned of all vegetation (stems, leaves, seeds, and all other vegetative parts) prior to leaving public lands in areas that are known by the authorized officer of the BLM to be infested with noxious weeds.

### **Cadastral**

10. The holder shall protect all survey monuments found within the right-of-way. Survey monuments include, but are not limited to, General Land Office and Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey Corners, reference corners, witness points, U.S. Coastal and Geodetic benchmarks and triangulation stations, military control monuments, and recognizable civil (both public and private) survey monuments. In the event of obliteration or disturbance of any of the above, the holder shall immediately report the incident, in writing, to the authorized officer and the respective installing authority if known. Where General Land Office or Bureau of Land Management right-of-way monuments or references are obliterated during operations, the holder shall secure the services of a registered land surveyor or a Bureau cadastral surveyor to restore the disturbed monuments and references using surveying procedures found in the Manual of Surveying Instructions for the Survey of the Public Lands in the United States, latest edition. The holder shall record such survey in the appropriate county and send a copy to the authorized officer. If the Bureau cadastral surveyors or other Federal surveyors are used to restore the disturbed survey monument, the holder shall be responsible for the survey cost.

### **Cultural**

11. Any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) discovered by the holder, or any person working on his behalf, on public or Federal land shall be immediately reported to the authorized officer. Holder shall suspend all operations in the immediate area of such discovery until written authorization to proceed is issued by the authorized officer. An evaluation of the discovery will be made by the authorized officer to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values. The holder will be responsible for the cost of evaluation and any decision as to proper mitigation measures will be made by the authorized officer after consulting with the holder.
12. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the holder of this authorization must immediately notify the authorized officer by telephone, with written confirmation, upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), the holder must stop activities in the vicinity of the



discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the authorized officer. The BLM Authorized Officer will determine avoidance, protection or mitigation measures in consultation with the Holder, Idaho SHPO, and affected Tribes. Costs associated with the discovery, evaluation, protection or mitigation of the discovery shall be the responsibility of the holder.

13. The holder shall notify the Authorized Officer at least 90 days prior to any non-emergency activities that would cause surface disturbance in the right-of-way. The Authorized Officer will determine if a cultural resource inventory, treatment or mitigation is required for the activity. The holder will be responsible for the cost of inventory, avoidance, treatment or mitigation; including any maintenance-caused damage. The Authorized Officer will determine avoidance, treatment and mitigation measures that are necessary after consulting with the holder and under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

### **Environmental Protection**

14. The holder agrees to indemnify the United States against any liability arising from the release of any hazardous substance or hazardous waste (as these terms are defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. 9601, et seq. or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, 42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.) on the right-of-way (unless the release or threatened release is wholly unrelated to the right-of-way holder's activity on the right-of-way.) This agreement applies without regard to whether a release is caused by the holder, its agent, or unrelated third parties.
15. The holder(s) shall comply with all applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations, existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated, with regard to any HazMat, as defined in this paragraph, that will be used, produced, transported or stored on or within the ROW or any of the ROW facilities, or used in the construction, operation, maintenance or termination of the ROW or any of its facilities. "Hazardous material" means any substance, pollutant or contaminant that is listed as hazardous under the CERCLA of 1980, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq., and its regulations. The definition of hazardous substances under CERCLA includes any "hazardous waste" as defined in the RCRA of 1976, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq. and its regulations. The term hazardous materials also includes any nuclear or byproduct material as defined by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, 42 U. S. C. 2011 et seq. The term does not include petroleum, including crude oil or any fraction thereof that is not otherwise specifically listed or designated as a hazardous substance under CERCLA section 101(14), 42 U.S.C. 9601(14), nor does the term include natural gas.

### **Fire**

17. When performing construction and maintenance (including emergency repairs) activities during the "closed" fire season (May 10 – October 20), as set by Idaho State Law, Title 38-115, or during any other closed fire season prescribed by the BLM Idaho State Director, the Holder, including those working on their behalf, shall equip at least one on-site vehicle with

firefighting equipment, including, but not limited to, fire suppression hand tools (i.e. shovels, rakes, Pulaski's, etc.), a 16-20 pound fire extinguisher, and a supply of water, sufficient for initial attack, with a mechanism to effectively spray the water (i.e. backpack pumps, watersprayer, etc.).

18. Within the bounds of the ROW, the Holder shall provide and maintain a vegetation clearance of 4 feet around the base of wood poles or other facilities with the potential to catch and/or spread fire.
19. During conditions of extreme fire danger or when the State of Idaho and/or the Idaho State Director issues a fire restriction order, operations shall be limited or suspended in specific areas, or additional measures may be required by the authorized officer.
20. In accordance with 43 CFR 2805.12(d) (or subsequent revisions), the Holder shall do everything reasonable to prevent and suppress wildfires on or in the immediate vicinity of the ROW. The Holder will immediately report fires to the BLM authorized officer or Fire Dispatch (insert phone number here) and take all necessary fire suppression actions, when safe to do so, with their personnel and equipment on any fires they cause to ignite.
21. To minimize disturbance of potential evidence located at a fire scene; the Holder shall properly handle and preserve all evidence in coordination with the BLM.
22. The Holder shall report to Fire Investigator or BLM Incident Commander and enter into origin area on BLM fires only when given permission to do so.
23. The Holder will cooperate with the BLM in the performance of fire investigation to determine the cause of the powerline failure. This includes:
  - i. Working with BLM to identify and collect potential evidence. The Holder is prohibited from collecting, removing, destroying evidence relating to the fire cause without first consulting with BLM fire investigators.
  - ii. If requested, providing BLM with a copy of the company's internal maintenance inspection and safety standard operating procedures.
  - iii. Determining the "failure" of the powerline (what "ignited" the fire) by investigating what caused the line to arc, drop, or shut-off. The utility will share the investigation information with the BLM fire investigators.